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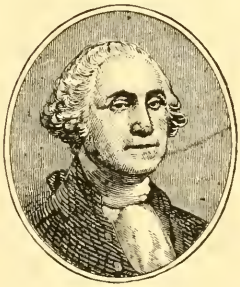
The Chester Washington Knew

A talk before

The New Century Club of Chester



February 22, 1916

by

Henry Graham Ashmead

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The Chester Washington Knew

Madam President, Members and Guests of the New Century Club:

It seems to me that there is a very general impression, even among members of patriotic societies, that at the close of the Revolutionary War, when Great Britain had acknowledged the independence of the several thirteen Colonies, immediately what we of this generation term "good times" set in, and happiness and prosperity prevailed throughout the land, whereas, in fact, a contrary condition existed. All commerce was suspended, bartering of commodities was general, little or no money was in circulation, there was hardly a wealthy man in all the late Colonies; the public was burdened with debt, few manufacturing or industrial enterprises were in active operation, and those gave little promise for the future. The Continental Congress, called into being as a representative of the Colonies, united to defend themselves against the aggressions of the king, at the close of the war, was powerless to enact laws to raise revenue for the support of a central government, to organize a federal judicial system, or to enforce the decrees of such tribunals had they been created. The prevailing idea among the masses was that as the struggle for independence had been waged against "taxation without representation," and now that victory had been won, why under the new conditions should taxes of any kind be levied? To such an extent was this idea carried that in Eastern Tennessee was projected a new state called Franklin, and in Massachusetts an insurrection, led by Daniel Shays —who had been a captain in the Continental army—prevented the meeting of the Supreme Court in that state temporarily. So strong a hold had this idea on the minds of the masses, that even after the adoption of the Constitution, in Pennsylvania armed bodies—(in Western Pennsylvania, the "Whiskey Insurrection," and in the counties of Lehigh, Berks, Northampton and parts of Bucks and Montgomery, known as "the Hot Water War,")—resisted the enforcement of certain revenue laws of the Federal Government. So gloomy was the outlook after the close of the Revolutionary War that even Washington despaired of the future. In his letter to John Jay, August 1, 1786, among other things he wrote: "I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror," and in June, 1787, in his letter to Lafayette, alluding to the death of General Nathaniel Greene the year before: "I have accompanied it" (his regret) "of late with

a query whether he would not have preferred such an exit to the scenes which, it is more than probable, many of his confederates may live to bemoan." It must have been a dreary outlook when the foremost man of the Revolutionary struggle felt called upon to pen such words as these I have just quoted. However, better times were at hand. The Constitution of the United States had been adopted and Washington had been called to the Presidency of the new government.

It is my purpose to call your attention to the Chester Washington knew when on his journey to his inauguration in New York, which occurred April 30, 1789. He left Mount Vernon April 16, and he, Colonel David Humphreys, his aide, and Charles Thomson, "the perpetual Secretary of Congress," stopped for the night of Sunday, April 19, 1789, at Wilmington. At an early hour the next morning, Monday, April 20, he and party set out for Chester, where it was proposed they should breakfast. The Saturday afternoon before, General Thomas Mifflin, then President of Pennsylvania under the old State Constitution of 1776; Judge Richard Peters, Speaker of the Assembly, and the City Troop of Philadelphia, had passed through Chester, fully expecting to meet the President-elect and his party at the Delaware State line the next day, Sunday. In this, however, they were disappointed. That night they remained at Marcus Hook, but the following morning, as already stated, Washington, who had been escorted to the State line by a number of dignitaries and distinguished Delawareans, was transferred into the keeping of the authorities of Pennsylvania.

In delineating the then features of Chester as Washington saw the town on that Monday morning, April 20, 1789, it seems fitting to begin the description at the King's highway or great southern post road, now Third street, where Lamokin run crosses that thoroughfare, it being for one hundred and sixty-five years the western boundary line of the old borough, and later, for thirty-nine years, that of the City until South Chester Borough was annexed to Chester. Lamokin, in the Indian tongue, means "the kiss of the water," and was known by that name in our history long prior to Penn's first coming to his Province. In 1789, from what is now Flower street to the run, the highway declined sharply, rising on the east side to where is now Norris street.

On the north side of the road stood the old Salkeld house, which the wealthy and noted Quaker wit (see note a) erected about

(Note a) One day, Salkeld was wearing a new hat that had a button and a loop, then quite fashionable, and he was remonstrated with by a Friend for yielding to the usages and customs of the world. John tore off this part of his apparel, remarking as he did so, "If my friend's religion consists of a button and a loop, I would not give a button or a loop for it." Another time at a meeting of Friends, which was being addressed by a tedious speaker who had many of his hearers almost asleep, Salkeld rose exclaiming: "Fire, fire!" The congregation, in alarm, inquired, "Where?" "In hell," he responded, "to burn up the drowsy and unconverted." On his return from a religious journey to New Jersey, he told inquiring friends that "I have breakfasted with the Ladds, dined with the Lords, and slept with the Hoggs," the

1708, and which for two centuries remained a landmark until Norris street was opened to public use. Then the house, which stood in the roadbed, was removed to make place for modern improvements. At what is now Howell street still stands an old Colonial milestone, whose inscription is hardly accurate, since in the forties of the last century, when every spring rain would topple it over, my father at last caused its removal about a hundred and fifty feet west, placing it securely beside the east gate leading into the lawn of our old homestead—"Kenilworth" (b). The Howell street school house now occupies part of the site of our old dwelling.

Between Pennell and Pusey streets, at that time stood what was then known as "Lamokin Hall," (c) a building that can be recalled to many of my hearers better as the Perkins House. As I recall it, it had a frontage of ninety feet. Peter Salkeld, a grandson of John, built the western end of the house prior to 1777, for in the spring of the following year Joseph Bishop, who lived to be an octogenarian, tells us that when a boy he stood on the porch of the house and watched the British fleet, which then laid off Chester, at practice, and at other times, when distinguished visitors were received, saw the vessels gaily dressed with many flags and streamers. The eastern end was added by James Withey, a son of Mary Withey, of whom I shall speak later on. His brother, Samuel Withey, who lived with him, was extremely unpopular with the people of the neighborhood, particularly mechanics and others, because of his declaration that people of their condition should, by law, be restricted from dressing in the same fabrics as those worn by their more fortunate neighbors, so that the well to-do and the laboring classes might at any time be distinguished by their apparel.

Just east of Pusey street a stream of water, now obliterated, crossing the highway—Bristow's run. John Bristow was the owner of all the land on the north side of the road from about where is now Ulrich street to where is now Central avenue, which had been patented to him by Penn. From Bristow's run to where is now the Second Presbyterian Church, the road bent slightly to the southeast and there in my early boyhood day was a considerable rise in the highway.

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names of the families where he had been entertained. One time as he walked from his cornfield, a Friend, one Clowd, was walking along the highway, who said, "John, thee will have a good crop of corn." Salkeld, soon after relating the incident, said that he heard a voice coming out of a Clowd saying, "John, thee will have a good crop of corn." He had a favorite horse with a blaze on its face, and a neighbor, who thought to jest with him, said, "John, thy horse looks pale in the face." "Yes, he does," was the reply, "and if thee had looked so long through a halter as he has, thee would look pale in the face, too."

(b) For a brief description of Kenilworth, see Martin's History of Chester, p. 443.

(c) Accounts of Lamokin Hall, see Martin's History of Chester, p. 443; Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 138; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 362.

As Washington traversed the road, it was not until he reached Concord avenue that another dwelling met his vision. At the northwest corner of that avenue stands an old hipped-roof house (d), in late years occupied as a Chinese laundry, erected in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was owned by Thomas Pedrick, a descendant of Roger Pedrick, the settler of that name, whose daughter, Rebecca, born at Marcus Hook, September 14, 1678, was the first child born to English parents in the Province. On the opposite northeast corner was the Turner house (e)—the site of the Columbia Hotel—where in 1739 Bramphyide Moore Carew, the noted "King of the Mendicants," as related by himself, escaping from servitude in Virginia, in the character of a pious fraud, obtained a considerable sum of money from Mrs. Turner. Many of my hearers can recall the dwelling as the Shaw homestead.

At this point, one of the company, probably pointing obliquely to the Delaware river, directed Washington's attention to where is now the Penn Steel Works, for at that time immediately opposite the present office, stood one of the most noted dwellings in this State—the Essex House (f), where Robert Wade received William Penn on his first arrival in the Province in 1682; where Colonel Markham, Penn's Deputy Governor, lived many months, and where Lord Baltimore stopped when he visited Upland; and where Lord Cornbury (g), Governor of New York, a first cousin of Queens Mary and Anne, of Great Britain, was a visitor. Lydia Wade, the widow, by will, in 1705, emancipated her slaves, the first instance of the kind in the history of Pennsylvania. The old building was torn down in 1851 to make way for a more modern structure, now in its turn demolished.

Approaching Chester river, there stood on an eminence where is now Penn street, in the middle of that street, south of Third, a story-and-a-half building, its gable facing the King's highway, from which projected the crane on which hung the sign of the

(d) See Birchall House, Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 167.

(e) See further account of the Turner (Shaw) House in Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 148.

(f) See Martin's History of Chester, p. 26; Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 38; Ashmead's History of Chester, p. 353. It was in this house that William Edmundson, a noted Quaker preacher, held the first Friends' Meeting in Pennsylvania, in 1675.

(g) Agnes Strickland, in her "Lives of the Queens of England," speaking of Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, says that he was half-witted, and was sent to the English Colonies of North America; where on state receptions he wore female attire, the better to represent his royal relatives. The fact is, that when drunk, which was quite frequent, his lordship would attire himself in quilted petticoats, panier hoops, wig, and dress of a woman of fashion of those days, and reeling along Broadway, followed by children, who trooped after him, until he returned to the fort to sleep off the debauch. Joseph J. Lewis and John F. Watson were told by Deborah Logan that an old woman at Chester had told her that she remembered Lord Cornbury's visits to the town; and that she was anxious to see him because he was the Queen's cousin and a Lord, but that she saw no difference in him save "that he wore leather stockings."

Boar's Head. In that house William Penn frequently lodged during the winter of 1682-3. The old building was destroyed by fire March 21, 1850.

At the northeast corner of Penn street, still standing, was the hipped-roof house—the Black Bear Inn (h) kept by George Gill, an Englishman and a bitter Tory, who, during the Revolution had been proclaimed a traitor, had fled to Nova Scotia, but subsequently returned to Chester, where he was arrested, but finally discharged by the Act of Assembly, which pardoned all such past offenses.

From where is now Dock street to the west end of the bridge was a causeway, then in bad condition and dangerous. Here it was in the darkness of the night of Brandywine battle, Colonel Cropper, then a captain in the Ninth Virginia Infantry—a part of Greene's command covering the American retreat—to prevent his men being crowded over into the marsh, fastened his handkerchief on a ram-rod, and stood holding it aloft as a signal, until his troop had filed by.

The company had now reached the bridge—the second that had spanned the creek at that place—and then not over ten years old, and much out of repair. On the east side of the bridge, Lafayette, on the night of Brandywine, although his wound in the foot had received only first aid on the field, stopped to station a guard to halt straggling American soldiers and return them to their several commands.

At "Front street that runs along the river," the present Edgmont avenue, on the right side, where is now National Hall, Thomson may have called Washington's attention to the dwelling of James Mather, the uncle of Thomson's first wife, while beyond it on the west side of the street, were the foundations of Saundeland's Double House, almost level with the earth. In that house the first Assembly in Pennsylvania met in 1682. Time covered these ruins, and buried them from sight until in July, 1893, while excavations were being made for the foundations of provisions stores, the old foundations of the Double House were uncovered. Hon. William B. Broomall had photographs made of the ruins—a most gracious, thoughtful act (i).

Still on the same side of the street, the first Meeting House of Friends in Chester, built in 1693, still stood, although then used as a dwelling. Beyond that was the old Court House and jail, built in 1695 by John Hoskins, and served as the temple of justice until 1724—was then occupied as a dwelling house that has only been removed within recent years. Beyond that was the "Granary," (j) built by Jasper Yeates in 1698, where hard tack in quantities

(h) See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 99; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 364.

(i) See Chester Times, July 29, 1893.

(j) Here was the ferry, in what is now Second street, and the following incident took place on Penn's second coming to his Province in 1700: "The next morning he (Wm. Penn) went over the creek in a

for the soldiers of the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the War of 1861-'65 was baked. It was removed in 1865. On the southeast side of James street—Third—was John Mather's house, built in 1700, later converted into the Lafayette Hotel. Here Charles Thomson had wooed Mary Mather, and Dr. Paul Jackson, the first graduate from what is now the University of Pennsylvania, courted her sister, Jane Mather. Further south, at what is now Graham street, Henry Hale Graham had his office, and still farther was his residence, erected in 1688 (k), and, although greatly changed and added to for business purposes; today stands the oldest house within the corporate limits of Chester city. Then came the Ashbridge House (l), still standing, adjoining to the front, the Jersey Hotel. Across Second street was the Lloyd House, built by David Lloyd, the great chief justice of Colonial days, in 1700. It is still standing, as are the two to the south, built by Francis Richardson in 1764, when he believed that Chester could be made the commercial rival of Philadelphia.

From where Washington rode could be seen the old James Barker House, built in 1699, from which the picturesque pent roof has been removed in recent years; and just above it, the frame house built by John Grubb, but then occupied by old Alice Cummings, the widow of the village shoemaker, then blind, whose white floors and well-kept furniture, her small garden and draw well with mossey bucket at its side, were vividly remembered by Deborah Logan when she in turn had grown old. Next came the Logan House, built by Jasper Yeates in 1700, later the home of Joseph Parker, for whom Parker street is named, where then resided his daughter, Mary Norris, whose daughter, Deborah Norris, married George Logan, United States Senator, who will always claim attention as "The Female Historian of Colonial Pennsylvania," came frequently to visit her mother. Further east was the home of Elisha Price, an earnest patriot, zealous churchman, and able lawyer. The Grubb, Logan and Price houses (m) have given way to the John J. Buckley mammoth packing industry.

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boat to Chester. And, as he landed, some young men officiously, and contrary to the expressed orders of some of the magistrates, fired two small sea pieces of cannon, and, being ambitious of making three out of two, by firing one twice, one of them, darting in a cartridge of powder before the piece was sponged, had his left hand and arm shot to pieces; upon which, a surgeon being sent for, an amputation took place." Clarkson's Life of Penn, vol. 2, p. 163; Smith's History of Delaware County, p. 200; Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 27; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 29. The young man, Bevan, thus injured, died the following April. Penn defrayed the expenses of his illness and ultimate burial. This was the first surgical operation of which we have record in the history of the Colonies.

(k) See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 67; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 353.

(l) See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 135; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 361.

(m) See Logan House, Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 73; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 352. Price House, Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 121.

Looking north up Edgmont avenue from Third, at the northeast corner was the tavern, "The Ship George Washington," later the City Hotel, and adjoining it the dwelling of Isaac Eyre. On the west side was the building erected by one of the Howells, as the dwelling and office for his tannery; and further up, the old Johnson tavern, erected prior to 1748, still standing, now the office of the representatives of the State Board of Health. Still further up Edgmont avenue, now known as the old Pennell House, facing Fourth street, built prior to 1732, was during the Revolution a hospital for American troops; and at one time in the winter of 1775-6, more than 1,800 men were located in the house and grounds ill with smallpox. That house and one at Bethlehem are the only two permanent Revolutionary hospitals in Pennsylvania, known to the War Department at Washington. Adjoining the Pennell house to the north is the old Bernard house, erected by Joseph Parker prior to 1733, which finally came into the ownership of Sheriff James Bernard, whose son, Isaac, became a distinguished general of the War of 1812, a Senator of the United States, and for whom Bernard street, West Chester, is named.

Continuing up Third street, on the north side, east of the City Hotel, was the old parsonage of St. Paul's Church, built in 1715, which was too expensive for the rector to occupy, hence it was sold, passing from owner to owner until finally it became the Globe Ale House. It was destroyed by fire in 1835. On the opposite side was the home of Frederick Engle, now greatly altered—No. 23 West Third street. In that house Rear Admiral Isaac Engle was born. On the same side, further up, was what we knew as the Flickwir House, Nos. 21 and 23 West Third street. It was built about the middle of the eighteenth century by Robert Coburn, and at the time of Washington's visit was owned by his son, Aaron, a hatter, and the first postmaster of Chester of whom we have record. In that house, in 1819, Butler and Worthington established "The Post Boy," the first newspaper ever published in Delaware county. Opposite it on the north side of the way, where is now the Colonnade Hotel, was the Stephen Cole house, then the store of Jane Davis, who among other articles, kept an assortment of drugs, the first apothecary shop established in the borough (n). At the

(n) Deborah Logan, then in her sixty-sixth year, 1827, in her manuscript notes to John F. Watson's "Visit to Chester" (Pennsylvania Historical Society's Collection), writes: "They" (Mrs. Ann Davis and her three daughters) "Kept the only Apothecary Shop in Chester." The mother, a daughter of John Bethel, who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1693, was born at Darby, August, 1706. Three years later, her father, then a member of the Assembly, representing Chester County, died. When an aged woman, in 1790, she stated that she remembered playing with the Indian children of the wigwams in the neighborhood of Darby. She was married in early womanhood to Benjamin Davis, and located in Chester. Small of person, she was frail in health, and for seventy years was afflicted with pulmonary consumption. Notwithstanding, she was remarkable for her sprightly and vivacious manner, and as a cultivated conversationalist. An invalid, she employed her time knitting, spinning, and other household activities. In her long struggle with disease for over seventy years, she daily used preparations of opium without acquiring the drug habit. That fact

southwest corner of Market Square, where the Delaware County National Bank is now, on an eminence, at that time was a small frame house, a flight of steps leading up to an unpretentious porch, where lived Elizabeth Pedrick, who sold milk for a living—the first milkman or milkwoman of which we have record in our city's annals.

As the cavalcade came up Third street—then James, so named in honor of the Duke of York, afterwards James II—the old market house in Market Square, built in 1746, was in full sight. The ancient structure—it was removed in the spring of 1857—was erected on a raised brick platform, curbed with stone, extending about fifty feet along Market street, and thirty feet in width. The building was thirty-five feet in length and twenty feet wide. The shingled roof was sustained by eleven brick pillars on the east and a like number on the west side, and the plastered ceiling within formed an archway the entire length of the market house. At the period of which I am talking, the frame chamber on the roof at the east end, used as a Borough Hall, Chester Library and public meeting room, and the wooden outside stairway, by which it was reached on the east side, had not been constructed. When the market house was taken down in 1857, the owner of the properties at the square encroached with their pavements until they formed, as today, an octagonal space not a square.

Looking down Market, or High street, on the right hand was the second Friends' Meeting House (o), erected in 1737, still standing, although much changed externally. On the left was an old log cabin, built by Jonas Sandelands about 1720, and at what is now the northeast corner of Market and Second streets, was the "Blue Ball Tavern," its quaint sign suspended from a pole projecting from the gable end on Market street, giving to it its name. It was built by Francis Richardson about 1770, and for nearly a hundred and fifty years there were holes in the walls where the scaffolding supports had been, and were left so, because the bricklayer had not been paid; and that was their mode, before the mechanics' lien law was enacted, of notifying their fellow craftsmen of that fact.

Further down was what is now the Steamboat Hotel, the handsome mansion of Francis Richardson, which was then in the sheriff's hands. There had lived the four beautiful daughters of Richardson and Francis Richardson, Jr., the son, who went to England, rose high in military life, and became the Colonel of the Cold-

aroused the interest of medical men, and on several occasions Doctors Benjamin Rush and Casper Wister, who were then recognized as at the head of the profession in this country, at their own request visited Chester to investigate the peculiar circumstances associated with her case. Mrs. Davis died July 21, 1795, in her eighty-ninth year. Her three daughters, who were models of filial piety and affection, who had refused to wed that they might minister to their mother, did not long survive her. The old house, which sixty odd years later became the residence of Dr. J. L. Forwood, was removed early in 1875 to give place to the present Colonnade Hotel.

(o) See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 175; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 334.

stream Guards, a position that never before had been conferred on anyone not of royal birth (p). Further up the river, at Welsh street, was the house of David Lloyd, then occupied by Raper Hoskins, later the home of Commodore David Porter, the hero of 1812; the boyhood home of Farragut; the birth place of Admiral David Porter, and Theoderick Porter, of the army, who was the first U. S. Army officer to fall in the Mexican War (q).

The old St. Paul's Church, its gable facing the square, stood on the south side of East Third street, then known as Church lane (r).

The company turned into Market street, and on the left side stood Daniel Sharpless' store, a two-story stone building, which was owned in 1850 by the late Judge John M. Broomall, when it was destroyed by fire. Where is now the Grand Theatre was a building kept as a tavern by John Schanlan, an Irishman, whose inn formerly was the resort of "sons of the old sod," but at that time was the general store of Davis Bevan, who had been a captain in the American army. Near the corner, just removed, was what was then known as the home of Jemima Dasey, a widow, and her maiden sister, Mary Linard, the latter a middle-aged woman, who could hobble along with great difficulty, using a cane. This site is now owned by L. A. Clyde (s).

(p) Francis Richardson's four daughters, Deborah, Hannah, Grace, and Frances, were noted beauties. Their complexion, tradition tells us, was so exquisitely transparent that the gallants of that day declared that when the ladies drank wine, "It might be seen trickling down their fair throats." Their elder brother, Francis Richardson, we are told by the annalist Watson and Deborah Logan, "was a person of great personal beauty." He shocked the good Friends of Chester by his fondness for dress. About 1770, he went to England, having formed a passionate longing for military life from association with the British officers in Philadelphia. In London, he roomed in the same house with Foot, the comedian and playright, and established a reputation for the theatre. He was received into the best society, and there laid the foundation for his preferment. He was noted as a swordsman and a dead shot with pistols. Sir William Draper stated that "Frank Richardson was one of the most singular and successful of American adventurers." He received a commission in the King's Life Guard—the noted Coldstream Guard—and when the Guards were ordered to embark for New York in March, 1779, Ensign Francis Richardson was named among the officers. This order seems to have been countermanded, for the Coldstream Guards took no active part in the Revolutionary War. See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 90; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 370.

(q) On Friday, February 17, 1882, the old building then used by Professor Jackson as a pyrotechnical factory was destroyed by fire. A large stock of fireworks exploded, resulting in the death of eighteen and the wounding of fifty-seven persons. The anniversary of this disaster is annually observed by the Chester firemen with appropriate religious ceremonies. The date stone of the ancient dwelling with the inscription D(avid) G(race) L(loyd) 1721 has been inserted in the chimney breast in the assembly room of the Hanley Hose Company's house on Fifth, facing Crosby street. See Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 110; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 355.

(r) Account of the church see William Shaler Johnson's "The Story of Saint Paul's Church and Parish, Chester, Pennsylvania, as told by its own records"; Martin's History of Chester, p. 113 to 134; Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 179; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 337.

(s) Morgan (Terrell) House, in Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 161; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 360.

Near the southwest corner of Fourth—then Work street, because the workhouse was located thereon—was what was later known as the Stacey House, which was erected some thirty years before by Caleb Coupland, who had been an Associate Judge of the Provincial Supreme Court, had entertained Lafayette there in 1777, and the next year, 1778, an aged man, was taken prisoner by a boat's crew from a British man-of-war, detained several weeks and, when discharged, died from the effects of his imprisonment. The adjoining houses then constituted the "Blue Anchor" tavern, which James Trigo built in 1732 "on the green, near the Court House." Later it was known as Hope's Anchor tavern (t). It had been kept as an inn by John West, father of Benjamin West. At that time Enoch Green was the landlord. It was known then, as it is today, as the "White Swan Hotel."

On the other corner was the jail, which was in architecture similar to the present City Hall, the gable end facing Market street and the walls, as were those surrounding the yard, were of plain stone. It fell back from the street nearly twenty feet, and in front was planted a double row of Lombardy poplars, extending to where the two doors on the south side of the Court House gave access to that building; but the poplars, as they grew old, took on the appearance of exploded skyrockets, until about 1820, they were replaced by linden trees. Here stood one of the town pumps*.

The Court House presented at that time much the external appearance that it does today, excepting the door in the front and the painted stones. A small belfrey rose from the roof, in which hung a bell, cast into the metal were the words, "Chester, 1729." The prothonotary's office, a two-story brick structure, stood then on the ground now occupied by the "Chester Times" building.

At the northwest corner of Fifth, then Free, street, and Market, was an old building—demolished in 1837—which was then the dwelling of Dr. William Martin, who was Chief Burgess of Chester. As Dr. Martin was the first man in the State to advocate free public schools, the School Board very properly named one of its buildings, at Fifteenth and Walnut streets, the Martin School.

On Market street, on the east side, next to Bickley's drug store, two houses had been built about 1730 by some of the Howell family; in one lived Dr. William Currie, who had been a surgeon in the Continental Army. He subsequently removed to Philadelphia, where he became a distinguished physician and an author of considerable prominence. When these houses were passed, the com-

(t) Hope's Anchor Tavern and the Stacey House, Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 101; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 369.

*The town pumps were three in number. One was at the Boar's Head Inn, Third and Penn streets; one in the Court House Square; and the third on Market street above Fifth, nearly in front of the Chester National Bank building.

pany halted before the Washington House (u), externally presenting then in a large degree the same appearance it does today, excepting that there were no buildings between it and Fifth street to the north, and an open space between it and the Currie residence to the south. The stone stable, with its gable end towards Market street, was then distinctly seen, while beyond, to the east, not a building was in view save the school house, built in 1770, on a lot donated by Joseph Hoskins, which was removed in 1870 to give place to what are now the Harvey and Dr. Starr school houses.

As the carriage containing Washington, Colonel Humphreys and Charles Thomson stopped at the front entrance to the hotel, where stood William Kerlin, the landlord, to receive them, all the inhabitants of the town flocked to see the distinguished party alight, and business for the day was at a standstill.

It was a wonderful event in the life of the village child to watch the cavalry, and hear the jingle of their swords and spurs, together with the champing of the horses' bits, as the City Troop rode into the ample yard of the post stage inn, and dismounted.

It was shortly after seven o'clock when the procession halted at the Washington House and the Presidential party were served with their morning meal. The accommodations of the tavern were taxed to such an extent that it is related many of the strangers were compelled to seek entertainment at other public houses and private residences.

After Washington had refreshed himself, he signified his willingness to receive the Chief Burgess of Chester and those who desired to be present at the interview. It was a goodly assembly of the inhabitants of the ancient borough, swollen by a number of those residing in the neighborhood. Conspicuous among them was Captain John Crosby, who built and then lived in the house now the residence of W. B. Harvey (v). Although then he was only forty-one, his silvery white hair and careworn face were noticeable. Those who knew him were familiar with the story of his capture as a prisoner of war in the Revolution, his imprisonment on the British frigate "Falmouth," in New York harbor, how the harsh treatment and insufficient food he received left their traces never to be effaced. David Marshall, of Marcus Hook, who had been a lieutenant in Wayne Brigade, was present, and Richard Riley, afterwards associate judge for many years, of the same place, moved about in his nervous way, pleased that by his activity on behalf of the Colonies, he had done his part in bringing about the establishment of a new nationality. Dr. Thomas Worrell, of Upper Providence, who believed in the curative virtue of native herbs, was present, as was Dr. Jonas Preston, who had recently moved to Ches-

(u) For accounts of the Washington House, see The Celebration of Penn's Landing by the Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, October 26, 1912, pp. 9-20; Historical Sketches of Chester, p. 82; Martin's History of Chester, p. 267; Ashmead's History of Delaware County, p. 367.

(v) In that house Admiral Pierce Crosby was born, and later it was the home of Robert E. Hannum.

ter, and Dr. William Currie, both of whom afterwards in Philadelphia became renowned physicians. Henry Hale Graham, who that fall was appointed the first President Judge of Delaware County, and Elisha Price represented the bar, while Thomas B. Dick and William Graham were students at law, the latter followed by his dogs, his daily companions, who ran among the people, receiving many a kick to intimate that they were unwelcome there (w). Davis Bevan, Isaac Eyre, Jeremiah McIlvain, Jonathan Pennell, William Worrell, of Ridley; Major William Anderson, later Congressman from this district; Richard Flower, Peter Deshong and others gathered in the presence of the President-elect, as the Chief Burgess stepped forth to make his brief address.

Dr. William Martin at that time was a young man who had not attained his twenty-fourth year, and being noticeably handsome, it was to be expected that he would present himself before Washington becomingly attired. He was dressed in the rich apparel in vogue toward the end of the eighteenth century before the influence of the French Revolution of 1793 had "knocked things into sixes and sevens." His purple velvet small clothes and vest and coat of the same color, adorned with silver buttons, each formed like a sugar loaf, studded with brilliants, became his graceful figure and his black silk stockings set without a wrinkle on his shapely legs. Large silver buckles, flashing with brilliants, fastened his pumps, and at his side hung a small, straight sword, such as were worn at that period by all gentlemen, save Friends, when in full dress. His hair, worn in a queue, was powdered, and a three-cornered hat, which he frequently carried under his arm, completed the attire. Advancing a few paces before the others, he said:

"To his Excellency, George Washington, Esq., President of the United States. Sir: The inhabitants of the town of Chester, impressed with the liveliest sentiments for your Excellency's character, congratulate themselves upon this opportunity being afforded them to pay their respects to, and to assure you of the unfeigned joy that swells their bosoms, while they reflect that the united voices of millions have again called you from the bosom of domestic retirement to be once more the public guardian of the liberty, happiness and prosperity of United America. From this event they entertain the most pleasing expectations of the future greatness of the western world; indeed, they cannot but observe to your Excellency that the torpid resources of our country, already discover signs of life and motion from the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Accept, sir, our fervent wish for your welfare—may you be happy; may a life spent in usefulness be crowned with a serene old age; and may your future reward be a habitation not built with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Washington, in reply, merely returned his thanks for the courteous reception which had been extended to him by the citi-

(w) See Ashmead's History of the Delaware County National Bank, "William Graham," p. 142.

zens of the borough, and expressed the hope that he should discharge the trust he was about to assume to the satisfaction of the entire nation. He then shook hands with the Chief Burgess and others with whom he conversed pleasantly, although it was noticeable that he seemed to show slight annoyance because of the military and public display which attended each step of his journey toward New York.

Shortly before ten o'clock, the company having all re-assembled, the journey toward Philadelphia was resumed. Washington ordered his carriage to the rear, and mounted a handsome white horse, which had been sent by the residents of Darby to Chester as a gift, and so mounted, rode by the side of Governor Mifflin at the head of the line, which turned into Fifth street, where on the left hand stood the Plow and Harrow Inn, which, under Mary Withey's management, had the reputation of being the best-kept tavern in the Colonies; and there it was Lafayette's wounds were dressed by Mary Gorman on the night of Brandywine battle. It was then rented by Major William Anderson, who, accompanied by his beautiful young wife, noted as one of the three beauties of Virginia, had only a short time before become residents of the borough.

Still continuing up the Queen's highway—named in honor of Queen Ann, in whose reign it was laid out—the party passed the school house at Fifth and Welsh streets—(popularly known as Love Lane) the building was then twenty years old—and were in the open country, although not yet beyond the corporate limit of the borough. Then the whole pageant became a grateful memory that Chester will not willingly let pass into oblivion.

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